Qs & As. R (249)

WHY SET ASIDE 1978 ASSURANCES ON SAUDI ARABIAN F-15s?

-- It is true that in 1978 Secretary of Defense Brown assured Congress that we did not intend to sell Conformal Fuel Tanks or Multiple Ejection Bomb Racks to the Saudis and that Saudi tankers were not compatible with F-15s. We also stated at that time that there were no plans to sell AWACs or the AIM 9L Missile to Saudi Arabia.

F. Schmeler 7/2/85

-- I am aware of a central concern of the Congress and others in this country regarding that undertaking. The undertaking was made in consultations with the Congress. We would like the Congress to consider with us whether that decision continues to serve U.S. interests given the radically altered strategic situation in the area.

-- The commitment was made in 1978. There is now a significantly greater threat to Western interests since the fall of the Shah and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

-- We have reviewed this question in this new context and have determined that our own interests in these changed circumstances require a fresh approach. We are consulting with you in the light of our common recognition of the altered strategic situation in the area.

-- We are now asking the Congress to consider with us the impact of the profoundly threatening circumstances facing the West at this time, and to join the Administration in taking steps to enhance Western security in the region. These additional resources to Saudi Arabia, and measures proposed to assure the continuing viability of Israel's defenses are contributions to our new approach.